



UT president, watchdog group differ on budget cuts

by JIM BERGAMO/KVUE News

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UT cuts 200 jobs, but is the State of Texas to blame? In his recent blog, the UT president suggests a better funding model for higher education is needed. However, an independent research group says the university can save a lot of money just by cutting out its own wasteful spending.

In his Tower Talk blog, University of Texas President Bill Powers discusses another round of budget cuts totaling \$14.6 million. While the cuts are mostly administrative, Powers asks everyone from university leaders and alumni to elected officials to help develop a new funding model for public education. Powers writes, "The current model of replacing decreased state support with budget cuts is not sustainable."

"Texas public universities don't have a funding problem they have a spending problem, a significant spending problem," said Justin Keener, the Vice President of the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

The independent research institute has kept tabs on UT's spending practices for more than a decade.

"Let's just look at operational costs, they have increased greater than than 60-percent, even counting for inflation, over the past 16 years, and let's take a look at salaries for professors, they've increased at twice the rate of inflation over the past ten years," said Keener.

As for the proposed budget cuts, students we talked just hope they are not the ones asked to make up the budget shortfall.

"I think students are mostly concerned with their tuition rising," said Sophia Ali, a sophomore at UT.

"Obviously I don't want higher tuition, so I'd rather them cut something else, but that's kind of selfish," said Jacob Vandevanter, a freshman at UT.

In his blog, Powers states that by reducing expenditures and increasing efficiency campus wide, UT has been able to save about 50 million dollars a year. Keener says only about a fourth UT's expenses are posted on the comptroller's website. He says that's enough to earn UT a failing grade in financial transparency.